

Soccer in America is now more popular than ever, better than ever, and has more college and professional opportunities than ever. Just about every town has a league and kids of all ages are lacing up for some fun-games. As a result, competition has grown and it has become increasingly necessary for player's to find unique and innovative ways to keep their development ahead of the competition. Over the last decade the speed at which soccer is played has increased enormously, placing tremendous demands on players to keep up with pace. Success in soccer today is not only about skills, but more importantly, speed and quickness.



A new concept for player development in 2004

SoccerCoachingInternational Peter Langens Talked with Ferdie Adoboe world record holder Speed Juggling. Ghanaian born US youth soccer sensation, Freddy Adu is a special player. What makes him special is that he is exceptionally skillful and incredibly quick with the ball at his feet. He demonstrates outstanding control and speed. His ball handling abilities, and overall soccer sense have made him the most sought after player his age in the world. What did Freddy do growing up as a soccer player that made him so good at an early age? What kind of habits did he have with the ball when he was 7? How can we produce a player like that in our culture? The answers to these questions should be implemented on the millions of youth players in America, and we would have found part of the magic recipe for creating the best players in the world. Ferdie recognize that a player's creativity and speed of play comes from their range of vision. Vision comes from superior comfort in handling the ball, because it frees the eyes to see the game. Better eye-foot coordination and balance improves your control and increases your ball-handling ability, and consequently your ball-handling speed. This is why i dedicate my trainings program to focus on elements and activities that affect comfort, speed, and quick-ness with the ball. Specializing and focusing on individual ball-handling skills has allowed us to probe deeper into habits needed to succeed at the highest levels of the game.

The way players approach the game of soccer, and relate to their soccer ball.

This concept is SPEED JUGGLING.

A few years ago at the USA Cup in MN, Freddy Adu put on a ball control exhibition by juggling a soccer ball on one leg, while balanced on the other. His touch moved the ball only inches off his foot. He barely moved, as the ball stayed right there on his foot while the touches became faster, and faster, till you could not keep up counting any longer. It was breathtaking, and ripples of appreciation just buzzed through the air.

One father next to me from Colorado said, "I wonder how he could do that and make it look so easy?" A coach next to him asked "how many years of practice did it take for him to be that good"? Right away I responded, "it couldn't have taken that long, he is only 12 years old." And there was a burst of laughter. I felt good about my little sly joke. Then I heard a young boy say, " I wish I could do that." Funny enough his friend responded, "If you could do that you would be on the national team" Isn't that the truth? I thought to myself.

The fact is that Freddy Adu is in the US national team pool at age 14 because he is an outstanding player. He has skills and abilities many kids cannot even imagine. He clearly demonstrates an unusual understanding of the ball, which is most likely

the result of his love for the ball, and his unique habits in playing with the ball. It is no coincidence that he is the one 13-year-old soccer player in America who demonstrates the ability to juggle with speed. And it is no coincidence that he happens to be originally from Ghana. Ghana is one of a few nations in the world where Speed Juggling is a national phenomenon. Ghana has dominated world youth football over the past decade and a half, winning the youth world championship twice, and twice runners up.

Therefore, there is no coincidence in the fact that Freddy, the worlds most expensive youth soccer player, speed juggles, and is originally from Ghana. Most young soccer players in West Africa particularly Ghana, can speed juggle. They can do that because the soccer culture teaches it to children who love and play the game. They call it "TOTALS" and every soccer player grows up doing it. Below is the blue print for developing the most talented and skillful players in the world today.

What is Speed Juggling?

Speed Juggling is a new developmental habit that inherently teaches a player the ability to handle the ball quickly, under pressure, and with control. A player's objective is to juggle a soccer ball on their foot as many times as possible in thirty seconds or one minute. It is a way of juggling a soccer ball that directly reflects the demands of today's quicker, faster, more controlled game. By speeding up your juggles you increase and improve your touches on the ball, you improve your con-

trol, and you learn to handle the ball quicker and faster.

Origins:

Speed Juggling was derived from a popular childhood habit in his native country Ghana (where he developed as a player), and transformed into a developmental skill that he teaches to give today's youth an exceptional relationship with the ball. The original form of juggling on one leg is most common in Africa and South America where players like Diego Maradona and Abedi Pele; three-times African Footballer of the Year grew up practicing it. Today we all know what those players can do with a soccer ball, and we can only watch in awe when Freddy Adu steps on a soccer field. Ferdie combined the concept of speed with that form of juggling to create Speed Juggling.

**No Love, No Skill,
No skill, no Game
Soccer is all about
Love.... Love of
the ball...**

How is Speed Juggling different from traditional juggling?

Traditional juggling is a low-pressure activity. If you can imagine an average professional player just juggling, he or she would look rather comfortable and relaxed because there would be no pressure. Speed juggling however, is a high-pressure activity because the player is in a hurry to get as many touches as possible. Speeding up your touches increases the risk of losing control of the ball, thus putting the player under pressure and stress to maintain a higher level of concentration. Speed Juggling simulates the demands and pressures of today's game, which is played at a much faster pace than just five years ago. This means not only must players be flawless in

their techniques and skills; they must also have the ability to execute them quickly. Speed Juggling is the habit that teaches both by intensifying a player's contact with the ball, thus, helping them understand and master the ball in a shorter period of time. The U.S. has been behind in the game for years - yes, we are catching up, but we have caught up to the habits of the 80s and 90s. Today's game has moved further forward and our coaches need to stay abreast with the times by introducing and teaching habits and skills that will make our players competitive in today's game. This means we have to think beyond traditional trends and come up with more creative, innovative and unique ideas not just to help



us catch up, but to help us take this game where no one has ever been before. For USA to be World Cup Champions, which is the objective of project 2010, our players need to be doing things different from the rest of the world, which gives us an edge over other them. Speed can help us succeed. Speed Juggling is easy to learn but it requires a particular technique that can be taught. All of my students are beginning to get the hang of speed juggling and as a result, are seeing direct improvements in their control of the ball and in their overall game. As part of any developmental program, Speed Juggling is an important developmental habit that can propel our players to the next level. Any player who discovers Speed Juggling becomes a better player by default, because they never leave the ball alone. This immediately results in an increase in number of touches, increase in speed of touch, thus improving the quality of touch and also, decreasing amount of time it traditionally takes to master the ball.

Speed Juggling is the one activity that accomplishes what every coach tries to instill in a player- Ball Addiction and Ball Mastery.

Tips and Technique

Start by placing the ball on your foot and hold it there for a few seconds. Foot must be angled slightly upward so that the ball can sit on it. Squeeze toes together to create a flat surface. Ball must be on the laces Lift ball up by lifting knee up slightly.

Do not strike the ball.



Passport

Ferdie Ato Adoboe

Coaching Experience: 1984-Present

- **Creator of Ferdie's Soccer Magic Skills Development Program**
- **Founder and Director, Ferdie's Soccer Magic Academy - Camps and Clinics.**
- **Head Soccer Coach, Mt. Holyoke College. (1994-96)**
- **Massachusetts ODP-skills development.**
- **Head Boys Soccer Coach, South Hadley High School, S.Hadley, Massachusetts.**

- **15 Years teaching skills at Camps in the Northeast. 1984**

Playing Experience:

- **1991-92 Football Club de Martigues, France 2nd Div.**
- **Tryouts with Olympic Marseille and Toulon, France 1st Div.**
- **1989-90 Professional Pro. St. George B.S.C., Sydney, Australia.**
- **1987-88 Gremio Lusitano, LASA League, MA.**
- **1983-87 Univ. of Mass Soccer-Third all-time leading Assists.**
- **Youth Development in Ghana, West Africa.**

Athletic Achievements/Awards:

- **Fastest Juggler in the World: Speed Juggling - Ferdie juggled a regulation size soccerball 136 times in 30 sec., and 263 in 1min.**



Guinness Book Recognitio

Part of his efforts in bringing Speed Juggling to the forefront of soccer in America was to lobby Guinness Superlatives to establish a world record in their publication, giving all soccer players an ultimate goal to strive for. On January 22 1999, the first Guinness world records were set at the Ft Lowell Shootout in Tucson, AZ., when Ferdie Ato Adoboe recorded 136 juggles in 30 seconds, and 262 in one minute. On July 16 2000, Ferdie improved his one minute record to 266 at the Schwann's USA Cup in Blaine, Minnesota. On August 27, 2003 Ferdie appeared on the NBC Today Show in NY and rewrote his name in the Guinness book of records juggling 141 times in 30 seconds.

Conclusion

Juggling is an important daily habit and practice for soccer players. All good soccer players can juggle, and juggling helps a good soccer player become a better soccer player. Speed Juggling adds quickness and fast footwork to your touch. Speed Juggling develops muscles and turns them into fast-twitch muscles because of continuous contractions in the legs, leading to quicker reactions. Speed Juggling helps players develop better balance and coordination, and it teaches the finest most delicate touch in the game of soccer.

As we begin a new era in US soccer history, and the popularity of soccer continues to soar, a good player is no longer one with skills but one with skills, speed, quickness and breathtaking control. It is with such foresight that I introduce you to Speed Juggling - the developmental habit for soccer players in the new millennium. Henceforth, it is not "how many" you can juggle, but "how fast" you can juggle. Speed Juggling is quick, fun, and better for your game.

So, work at it, have fun with it and you won't lose. .

Soccer is all about Love- Love of the ball...



Kids who know how to play with the ball, love the ball. Kids who love the ball, play with the ball. This love thing feeds their desire to play the game, which allows them to master the ball and succeed at the game. So by TEACHING kids how to love, and PLAY with the ball, we are in-fact teaching them to love the game and succeed at it.

For more information about Ferdie, visit his website www.soccer-magic.com

Speed Jugglers Accomplishments

Robbie Russell set the first youth speed juggling record at Ferdie's soccer Magic Academy in 1995 with 115 juggles in 30 seconds. Robbie also went on to become a high school All-American, college All-American and captain at Duke University, and now playing for Sogndal in the Norwegian premier league. Bruce Arena recently invited Robbie Russell to join US men's national team in preparation for Germany 2006.

Mary McVeigh of Northampton, MA set the first women's Speed Juggling record on August 13 1999 at Ferdie's Soccer Magic Academy in Easthampton, MA with 92 juggles in 30 seconds. Mary went on to become

a high school All-American, a college all-American at Dartmouth, and played for the Philadelphia Charge in the WUSA

In our 80+club are notables such as Kerry O'Malley, 2002 big east rookie of the year at Providence college; Erin Duffy, 3 year All-American at Wheaton college; Kirsten Ahrendt, 2004 freshman # 10 at Dartmouth and prospect for the Danish national team, Aaron Posner 120 juggles is now at Syracuse University, and Catherine Pacilio of William and Mary fame and now Marketing Director at MYSA.

Budding stars

These young players coming up thru our program are rewriting our record books with remarkable numbers, and all the while making noise with their game around the country. They can speed juggle, they can play, and they are wanted by teams everywhere: Christopher Wade 13 years old of Brunswick ME. 117 in 30 sec. Mike Posner of Springfield, MA, 110; 15 year old Holly Tyser of Somers CT equaled Mary's female world record of 92 juggles last summer.

Emily Harris, Danielle Dakin, Lauren Yelinek, Akua Murray-Adoboe, Samantha Fortier, Skyy Anderson, are a short list of players demonstrating tremendous potential for the future. They are all in state, regional and national ODP team pools.

**Speed Juggling is
the one activity that
accomplishes what every
coach tries to instill in a
player- Ball Addiction and
Ball Mastery.**